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* PRESS DIGEST *
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January 20, 1955

(NOTE: This is a weekly summary of items in the general press relating to Jews, Judaism, Zionism, Israel, the Middle East and developing United States policy for that area. The time period covers the seven days ending on the Thursday whose date appears above. This summary is a service provided members of the American Council for Judaism. None of it is offered for re-publication. F:

New York Times--Jan. 16, 1955

"A BREAK IN ARAB NEUTRALITY"

(The editorialist quoted below correctly appraises the recent Turkey-Iraqi pact as an evidence of the success of current American policy for the Middle East. Note his conclusion concerning its effect on Israel.)

"The construction of a 'northern tier' for the Middle Eastern defense structure has taken a long spurt forward as a result of the decision by Turkey and Iraq to conclude a mutual defense alliance against aggression and to call on other Middle Eastern states to join this undertaking. The decision was reached during a visit to Iraq by Turkish Premier Menderes, who will now visit Syria and Lebanon and is expected to visit Egypt later. Turkey is already allied with Pakistan, and efforts will now be redoubled to close the gap in the 'tier' by bringing into the new alliance system Iran, and possibly Afghanistan. As Turkey is also a member of the North Atlantic alliance and the Balkan alliance, it would form the link between the Western and Middle Eastern defense structures, which, in turn, would have an Asian link with the Southeast Asian defense system through Pakistan.

"Many more steps will have to be taken before that elaborate structure is completed, and much will depend upon Egypt, which considers itself both the leader of the Arab world and the champion of an all-Arab defense system tied to neither the Communist bloc nor the West. But Iraq's alliance with Turkey marks the first break in Arab 'neutrality,' which may persuade others to follow suit. It is significant that this break was first made by an Arab country which was compelled to take stringent measures against Communist infiltration and subversion.

"The Turkish-Iraqi pact, like the whole concept of the 'northern tier,' has long been favored by Secretary Dulles, and was, in fact, the basic consideration in extending American military aid to Iraq. The British favored a wider Middle Eastern defense structure, including both Arab and Western countries, but they welcome the new alliance as a step which will increase the security and stability of that region. The pact does introduce one complication in that it excludes Israel. But inasmuch as the new alliance pledges its partners to comply with the principles of the United Nations Charter and to eschew all aggression, it should increase rather than diminish the safety of Israel."

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New York Times--Jan. 16, 1955**"BEN-GURION SEEKS TO FORM A FRONT"**

(Harry Gilroy's account confirms rumors previously reported in the Yiddish press--see Highlights, Jan. 7, 1955, page 2, concerning a possible effort by Ben-Gurion to recapture the Premiership of Israel.)

"JERUSALEM, Jan. 10--Political activity by former Premier David Ben-Gurion is stirring speculation as to whether he intends to return to leadership of the nation.

"Since Dec. 7, 1953, Mr. Ben-Gurion has spent most of his time as a working resident of Sde Boker, a small experimental settlement in the arid central Negev. In recent weeks he has conferred with the leaders of all of Israel's parties except the Communists and the Herut Movement, the most aggressive nationalist group.

"Mr. Ben-Gurion has proposed to the party leaders the creation of a 'Pioneering Front' in connection with the election of the Knesset (Parliament), scheduled for July 26.

"One part of the proposal is reported to envisage a joint platform for all parties joining the front. Another part provides for electoral reform.

"...Experienced analysts of Israeli politics infer that Mr. Ben-Gurion would be willing to become Premier again if his 'Pioneering Front' won a Knesset majority. However, it is also said that even a good prophet would starve if he tried to live by forecasting what Mr. Ben-Gurion was going to do..."

New York Times--Jan. 17, 1955**DISMAY IN EGYPT OVER IRAQI-TURKISH PACT**

(Robert C. Doty's account of the Cairo reaction to the Iraqi-Turkish pact indicates that Egypt as well as Israel is concerned about it. The situation recalls the words of former Assistant Secretary of State Byroade: "It seems we have reached the stage...where each side honestly feels we are partial to the other. In a crude sort of way perhaps this could be called progress--progress toward the ultimate goal of having both sides feel we are truly impartial.")

"CAIRO, Jan. 16--The Egyptian Government said tonight the agreement of Iraq to sign a defense pact with Turkey posed a threat to the existence of the Arab League. It called upon the Premiers of all Arab states to meet here next Saturday in an effort to avert the crisis.

"The Government thus put clearly on record the dismay evident here since Wednesday when it was announced in Baghdad that Iraq was determined to conclude an alliance outside the Arab League with Turkey. The action was a threat to Egyptian leadership of the Arab world, which has been based on efforts to make the Arab collective security pact the exclusive defense instrument of this area.

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"Major Salah Salem, Minister of National Guidance (Propaganda) and Sudan Affairs, said at a press conference the basis of Egyptian foreign policy was the effort to strengthen the Arab League and maintain Arab unanimity behind an 'independent foreign policy approved by them all and by all means free from any direct or indirect external influence.'

"This goal and the parallel one of achieving a unified effective defense under the Arab collective security pact--still 'just a sheet of paper'--are the only means for awakening the Arabs, he said.

"The Iraqi Government has declared its resolution to conclude a separate pact irrespective of the unanimous Arab policy before the Arab security pact comes to life and without consulting any of the Arab Governments,' Major Salem said.

"This is undoubtedly a serious event that may threaten the very existence of the Arab League and endangers Arab nations as a whole,' he said...."

New York Times--Jan. 19, 1955

"UNITED STATES DIPLOMACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST"

(The Times ace, C.D. Sulzberger, writing from Paris with his customary perception, points out that "we retain immense interest in Israel" but that there is no longer "any tendency to overemphasize...a New Delhi-Tel Aviv axis." He goes on to write:)

"...The reason for changed emphasis was political stultification in the Middle East. No plan for devising potential area protection against external aggression or internal subversion seemed to stand a chance. The proposed Middle East Defense Organization to complement NATO never advanced beyond the blueprint stage. Washington's scheme for parallel security pacts with the Arab states and Israel failed. Moslem fanaticism, directed against both Israel and the Anglo-American bloc, has been combined with pandering to uninformed and hysterical opinion by the Middle Eastern Governments. The result was stalemate.

"Washington's efforts now aim at terminating the diplomatic impasse that has prevailed since the Palestine war erupted. Two basic objectives are apparent: the attention of the Arab states must be directed northward toward Soviet Russia and the danger of direct or indirect aggression; the attention of Egypt must be focused southward into Africa.

"This change of emphasis apparently has now started. France and Britain don't particularly like it, but Egypt tends to think increasingly about the Sudan and North Africa and less about Western Asia. Likewise the northern band of Arab states--Iraq, Syria and Lebanon--are turning their attention toward the potential menace of things Soviet. At the same time Cairo is moving against fanaticism. The Moslem Brotherhood has been smashed. Haj Amin el Hussein, exiled Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, friend of the Nazis and arranger of assassinations, is being turned out of his Egyptian refuge. Shortly he will settle in Saudi Arabia.

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"The gradual destruction of the Arab League seems to be commencing. This organization was originally inspired by the British. London thought it would be useful to have the Moslem states of the Middle East joined in one body. The British have always had great interests in Western Asia and these continue.

"The Arab League, however, developed into an alliance devoted solely to the ultimate destruction of Israel and to the weakening of the power of England and her allies. It prevented organization of any Middle East defense system tied to NATO. But the league is now seriously threatened. A meeting convening in Cairo Saturday will decide in effect whether the organization continues as a viable body. Egypt, still leader of the league, is furious with Arab states planning defense pacts with Turkey.

"Such pacts have been encouraged by quiet American diplomacy. The United States--impelled by our able Ambassador in Ankara, Avra Warren--conceived the thought of using Turkish initiative to break up the Middle Eastern logjam. To this effect a Turkish-Pakistani alliance was encouraged.

"This is militarily meaningless. Pakistan is a geographical concept divided into two distant Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern portions. And Turkey, its ally, is many hundreds of miles away to the west. Nevertheless the concept of a northern band of Moslem states bordering Russia was given shape by this curious accord. Now it is being filled in. Iraq and Turkey have agreed in principle to sign an alliance. Syria and Lebanon may join. This week's Arab League conference represents a desperate Egyptian effort to prevent just that. Cairo doesn't like to see itself losing the initiative held by controlling the Arab League.

"The gravitational pull of Turkey and Pakistan is beginning to attract Middle Eastern states into a new orbit. Ankara has managed with skill to emphasize to the Arabs the need for joining in world security. Premier Menderes explained in a speech broadcast in Turkish and Arabic that no regional defense organization in the Middle East could succeed without close cooperation with NATO--'the real shield against danger.'

"By encouraging new political trends the United States has no intention of abandoning Israel or permitting revival of the Palestine war by rearmed Arab states. Similarly Washington considers the role of Pakistan in this as a Middle Eastern rather than a South Asian land. American policy is not trying to favor Pakistan over India in their subcontinental quarrel. The essential objective is to replace chaos with regional stability in the traditionally restive area between Tel Aviv and New Delhi."

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